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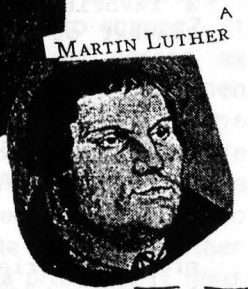
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ASK YOUR DOCTOR or DRUGGIST

top staff box



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Special Bidet Issue!

Condoms and Christianity by:chris brown

In a recent article in the Sou'wester a fellow student laments the fact that Rhodes is not allowing condoms to be sold on campus due to "Christian ethics" One begins to wonder even why such a fact would take up half a page's space in any paper. I can see it now, hordes of students lining up at the bookstore,males and females, jockeying for position in line so they can pick up their box of Trojans for their next sexual encounter. The lines would probably even be longer then when we buy books for each semester. For my fellow student the issue is responsibility. If that is the case, then any two consenting who want to indulge the more primitive side of the animal are more then capable of making time in their schedule and going to their local grocery store and picking up some condoms. It is not up to the college to be sure that the student body(pun intended) has condom in hand when the weekend arrives. On the other hand, my fellow student shows with great accuracy that Rhodes has a twenty-four hour visiting policy for males and females to mingle in their dorm rooms and that many students drink in large quantities while on campus. These are surely marks of a school that is committed to the moral autonomy of its students and by no means is a college that is imposing "Christian ethics" upon its students.

Memoirs of an ex-Greek

CLIP-N-SAVE SIR FORM

by Julie Meiman & Ross Gohlke
Excellent professors get fired (see every other article). Rumor has it that the little evaluation forms we fill out at the end of the semester have a lot to do with it. These are called the SIRs. The administration hands them out to you so that you can tell them whether your teachers are "good" or "bad." You know that Rhodes has certain STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE for the teachers

they hire. The administration (for our purposes here— the President, the Vice President, the Dean of Academic Affairs) wants to make sure you get the best possible education. Remember, your best interests are at heart. Here are a few important questions to ask yourself throughout the semester.

a. = a very good professor
d. = deny tenure

1. DOES MY PROFESSOR LIKE ME?

- a. never picks me
- b.
- c.
- d. asks me questions I can't answer

2. HOW DOES MY PROFESSOR PRESENT HIM/HERSELF IN THE CLASSROOM?

- a. dresses cool
- b.
- c.
- d. needs to consult fashion magazine.

3. WHAT DOES MY PROFESSOR EXPECT OF ME?

- a. to answer "yes" or "no" questions
- b.
- c.
- d. to think for myself

4. HOW DOES MY PROFESSOR GRADE MY WORK?

- a. doesn't count off for spelling errors, grammatical errors, or late papers
- b.
- c.
- d. counts off for incomplete thoughts

Established 1893



Special Bid Day Issue!

BYER'S ASS

"A hero in the German style."

Immutability

by Mike Augspurger

One of the quirks of a favorite high school teacher of mine was to assign an essay by saying, in effect, "Write an essay on the book we just finished discussing." Annoying as the habit was, we usually found our way around the problem. Cries of "how long?" and "on what?" inevitably overwhelmed the man. Ten minutes later, we'd have six or seven suggestions written down in our notes, and an estimated length in double-spaced, one-sided pages.

That was high school. The Rhodes classroom often looks disappointingly similar. The difficult question, "What is of primary importance in the text studied?" remains the domain of the professor. The students at Rhodes don't expect to answer that question anymore than a high school student; no question routinely receives more silence than "What aspect of the readings would you like to discuss today?"

This situation is perhaps not as unfortunate as I have portrayed it. Certainly much class time would be spent in a search for basic thematic importance; many students would lose interest, and end up unimproved intellectually by the experience. The professor would be left in front of the class alternating between prying for a response and lecturing on various outside interpretations; his efforts might brand him as "confusing,"

"difficult to follow," or the worst of possibilities, "boring." On the other hand, a professor who made students reach for answers rather than leaning over to provide them might appeal to a small community of students at Rhodes. He might help five or six people in a class of twenty-five learn more about a novel, and more importantly, understand the process that brought them their knowledge. Of course, nineteen people would be bored.

Among the relatively small percentage of Rhodes students who have come to college to get an education and not just a degree, there are many different approaches to learning. The particular pedagogy described above would seem to cater to a great many of those. Unfortunately, it does not pamper a student who is not devoted to the subject matter.

Judging from past faculty decisions, Rhodes is not interested in different approaches to the classroom. If students find a professor unsympathetic, or boring, or difficult (i.e. if they don't teach like their favorite high school teacher), they let the administration know in a very concrete and majority-ruled fashion: the SIRS. If the administration finds that faculty member undesirable, it utilizes that concrete figure to rid itself of an unconfirming piece. It is a system which easily

purges itself of Bob Byers and Andrew Hurleys, among many others.

Perhaps if Rhodes had enough professors to allow English majors to choose among classes, or if SIRS had been discontinued, or if some of the English professors who should know better had stood up in defense of Byer, he wouldn't have been fired. But the most frustrating aspect of the system is that most



Larry Burrows

IVY COMPTON-BURNETT
Incredible behavior.

everyone is happy with it. No students, no faculty, and no administrators have to adjust to new surroundings. Rhodes is just like last year, whether you've worked here for 15 years or come straight from high school. It will undoubtedly continue to churn out societally capable graduates who have not been pushed to brilliance. But if an intellectual challenge is what you desire, consider transferring.

Because while Rhodes will always be up-and-coming, it will never arrive.

Why Byer Got Fired and why it makes me uncomfortable

by Ross Gohlke

I remember sitting on the pot my freshman year looking for something to read. As I shut the stall door I was confronted by an especially drab flyer that said "Subvert the SIRS!!" and rambled on about how these evaluation forms are used to justify firing professors. As I finished my business, I wondered how the responsible party expected to be taken seriously without substantiation. How easy it is to start vicious rumors and indict the powers that be—but there's never any proof! I still had those peachy brochure pictures in my head; and I still had great confidence that the people in charge knew what they were doing and always acted justly according to the dictates of a good conscience. I spent the next year and a half forgetting how pretty the brochures were. But I never lost faith in the administration's commitment to Truth, Loyalty, and Service and at the end of each semester, I filled out my SIRS like everyone else in the class—in five minutes. They were just more of the meaningless but necessary paperwork that had to be turned in to keep my scholarship.

I came back to Rhodes this semester actually excited for the first time about being here. It didn't last very long. During the first week I discovered that an English teacher whom I respected greatly had been fired over the summer. Well, "fired" might be a little harsh—they did give him a year's notice so that he could "make other arrangements." As I sat in Bob Byer's office that day with my jaw on the floor, I suddenly remembered all

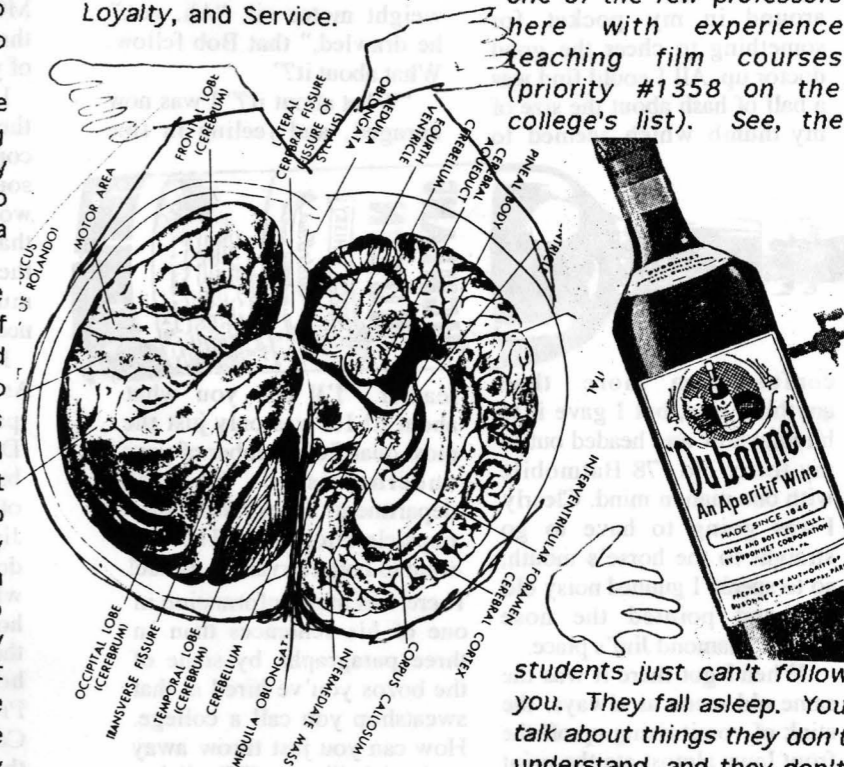
the things that pissed me off about Rhodes and made me want to leave. I felt a little sick. I remembered why I never went to AT&T (Ask, Talk, & Tell) with President Daughdrill. Either my questions sounded stupid to a college president, or I knew that the things eating at me were bigger than a pleasant discussion over lunch could settle. Besides, I reasoned, I already knew what the bureaucratic stock response would be to everything I questioned, so what's the use?

To be honest, I have little hope that anything will change because of my questioning, but I have to get it all out. I still have a conscience.

I even followed the proper channels of authority for trying to find out what really happened to Byer. I already knew his side of the story. First I went to the department chair, who referred me to his superior. So I took my inquiring mind to the Dean of Academic Affairs who told me there was no way in hell that I, or any student could, do anything about the situation. Apparently he had misunderstood my intentions and proceeded to politely tell me he couldn't tell me anything. I left his office knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that faculty information is confidential because of the law, and no one is allowed to talk to me about it, and that this is standard procedure for "any corporation or business."

Well, I don't need Them. I'm a fairly intelligent guy. And Byer has been cooperative. The cool part is, regardless of what Byer says, or what I say, They can't respond because, according to the Dean, They would be breaking the law to engage

in any public discussion as to the specific terms of termination. Now, an irresponsible campus activist with a proverbial axe to grind would have a field day with this. But I am merely a humble student who wants to set the record straight while exercising his right to tell Them that I think Byer—or any professor, for that matter—deserves better treatment in the name of...bear with me... Truth, Loyalty, and Service.



Artist's rendition of Bob Byers Ass

Basically, They told him that his SIRS weren't up to par, that he didn't meet Rhodes' almighty Standard of Excellence. The students just didn't like him.

Of the three areas we consider in job evaluation, Bob, your service record is sufficient and your published scholarship—well, you could have more of it, although what little you have is good, so we won't

worry too much about it—that's not the problem. But your teaching, Bob. It's the monotone. Maybe if you put an outline on the board at the beginning of every class and used audio and visual aids on occasion... It doesn't matter that you're "brilliant" by the admission of at least two colleagues who have worked with you (fact), or that you incorporate all the academic disciplines into your own (the heart and soul of a liberal arts education), or that you are one of the few professors here with experience teaching film courses (priority #1358 on the college's list). See, the

students just can't follow you. They fall asleep. You talk about things they don't understand, and they don't like that. They feel threatened. They feel helpless. And you know, Bob, if the students don't like something we have to take notice, because they're the reason we're here! We know you'll understand. With your skills you would be happier somewhere else anyway. Look at the bright side. We could have let you go after the three-year review of your tenure track, but we gave you the benefit of the doubt and kept you another year. It's just that those darn SIRS didn't improve as much as we would have liked. We have standards here, Bob.

MYSTIK ADHESIVE PRODUCTS

And it wouldn't be efficient to keep you until the traditional six year review of your tenure track because there's no way your SIRS would improve enough to save your job at that point. To keep you that extra year would just be silly. We're really doing it for your own good.

Does this sound a little funny to anyone? It should come across as absolutely hysterical when you consider the administration's double standard: students supposedly have a lot to say (a la SIRS) in whether or not a professor is fired. Yet students have no opportunity to protest or reverse the decision, nor are they consulted in the hiring of new professors. On top of this, most students have no idea how important the SIR bubble forms (the ones fed through a computer for statistical results) are, and chances are, no one will tell them. If you are a student, listen up. Your opinion does matter. They can't justify firing someone without bad SIRS, at least on paper. If you are a professor, tell your students about SIRS, if not for your sake, then for that of your colleagues.

What it boils down to is this. I feel like I've been lied to; I wonder who the administration is loyal to; I'd like to know who they are serving. They tell me its me, the student. But I seriously question service rendered by a liberal arts institution that reduces its professors to numbers in a computer, that gives its students the illusion of power without even making it explicit, that values expediency and tidiness above the pursuit of true intellectual endeavor. And there's one more thing. I'm not finished.

Report from the Front
by Col. Bat Guano

I was fired yesterday. Sacked. Given my walking papers. Basically, I was told to bend over and smile. And it wouldn't, you know, be so bad if it didn't mean that I now have to figure out how to unload three exact replicas of the Partridge Family bus loaded with assault rifles from the Honduran black market. Boy, I got smoked on that one.

But enough about me, right? I don't get paid obscene amounts of dollars per word by the Rat's Ass to blab about my personal problems, obviously. No, friend, I get paid obscene amounts of dollars per word to blab about the personal problems of a hardy and good-hearted prairie College down here in Memphis and the blasphemous exploits of that black-hearted sidewinder, that yellow-bellied, low down, dog-tooth grinnin', prayers-for-men-aprayin', carpet-rustlin' scalawag known as the Reverend Jim Daughdrill. Fortunately, that stuff is none too scarce.

For example, just last night, right, when I was feeling kind of bummed about the job thing, you know, and I had gotten tired of sitting around the pad and, well... you know, smokin'... and I went down to the P&H for a little R&R and MGD, I ran into this PHD I knew from the old alma mater.

He was slumped over the bar actually. That unmistakable bulbous dome which normally read, "product of Harvard" now said something garbled about three pitchers and no sign of slowing down. Now here was a guy in my kind of mood. Brazenly as always, I decided to introduce myself.

"Hello, Doc. Bat Guano's the name. And you are..."

"HAWTHORNE!" he sputtered.

With a name like Guano, who am I to argue, right? Any dude's pseudonym is good enough for me. So I bought him a beer which he graciously accepted, and just to relax him I whipped out one of my special stogies and there we were smokin' up a storm, until I got him relaxed enough to ask him just what he was

bummin' on, and this is what he told me:

"I was fired yesterday. Sacked. Given my walking papers. Basically, I was told to bend over and smile. I don't want to talk about it."

As soon as he said that, my patented Guano Sense started kickin' like the Rockettes on mescaline: obviously something was once again awry at Rhodes, and immediately I forgot about the day's troubles and remembered my mission for the Rat's Ass. And speaking of asses, if I couldn't save this guy's then maybe at least I could cover my own, right? So I fished around in my pocket for something to cheer the good doctor up. All I could find was a ball of hash about the size of my thumb which seemed to



confuse him more than anything else, but I gave it to him anyhow and headed out to my trusty old '78 Batmobile with one man in mind. Clearly I was going to have to go straight to the horse's mouth, so to speak: I gunned noisy old 440 and pointed the nose toward Diamond Jim's place.

When I got there it was the same old scene as always: the stink of vomit rising up off the front lawn almost ate the paint off my car. Frankly, I'm still amazed that all those trustees could sleep out there like that. But hey, like D.J. always says, that's what the good stuff's for, right? So I parked up on the lawn like usual and stepped out of the car like everything was natural, which of course it was, and was met at the door by this beefy blonde whom it seemed to me I had grokked before.

"Patsy Blandersnatch?" I asked? "Class of '89?"

The same. She told me that she was now the carpet man's personal, um... secretary. Figures. She always did look good with brown lipstick. But now was no time for reminiscing. I brushed past her with my infamous right cross and found the man I was looking for, predictably, in the

most tasteless part of the President's Mansion: The Jungle Room.

"What the hell are you doing here, Guano?" he asked, looking resplendent in a yellow silk bathrobe and a blue paisley fez. Actually, he was kind of hard to see, backed as he was by lime green zebra stripes and blacklight posters.

"I think you know what I'm here about," I said, trying to be as macho as possible. "It's your latest try at streamlining the faculty."

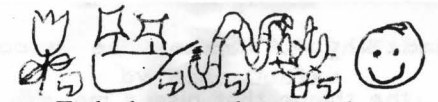
He thought for a minute, and then I could see recognition rising to the surface of his eyes like air bubbles floating in 40-weight motor oil. "Ah, yes," he drawled, "that Bob fellow. What about it?"

"What about it?" I was now enraged, and feeling in fine

feather. "I'll tell you what about it! He was only just the most qualified member of your undernourished English department! Jesus Christ on a popsicle stick, Jim! The man went to both Harvard and Yale!

There was more information in one of his sentences than in three paragraphs by some of the bozos you've hired at that sweatshop you call a college. How can you just throw away credentials like that?" Realizing that my tirade was out of steam, I leaned back and braced myself for the noxious wave of bureaucratic doublespeak that I knew was soon to envelop me, just like on the Stanley and Jaslow case back in '90. But it never came.

"Oh, dammit," said the President, "that's just the problem, don't you see? That man is *too* damn smart. He made students uncomfortable, he made the trustees uncomfortable, and he sure as hell made me uncomfortable.



To be honest, whenever I hear him talk I'm almost positive he's making fun of me, but I can't be sure because, well... I just can't understand a damn word he's saying. Besides, what the hell do you think the Purpose of a College is?"

Uh- oh, I thought. Here it comes.

"Do you think a college is some kind of damn safehaven for intellectuals?"

"Well, actually..."

"Hell no, son. Now read my lips on this one: WE'RE ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY. Can't you get that through that burned-out head of yours?"

I was reeling. First to hear the words of Frank Zappa coming from such an infernal source, and then to have my worst suspicions laid bare like that at the uppermost level of the administration, was all much too much for me. I needed a drink.

I didn't get one, of course. As is always the case when I

pay a journalistic visit to the Daughdrill household, I was brusquely conked on the back of the head by one of Diamond Jimmy's hired goons and deposited on East Parkway. But when I came to about four hours later, I still remembered the last thing I had seen in that house of ill-repute: the President had had a new College Seal drawn up. It was the same as the old one of course, but the words "Truth, Justice and the American Way," or whatever the hell it used to be, had been replaced with the slogan, "CAVEAT EMPTOR" which, for all you non-classically oriented readers out there, means "Let the Byer beware." Until next time, or until you too are deemed to talented for your own good, keep on takin' care of business. Just like Diamond Jim.

DUE TO UNFORUNATE & UNAVOIDABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CREATOR OF 'FAT BUG & SLUG BOY' WAS A LAZY-ASS THIS WEEK. NO STRIP, IN OTHER WORDS. DEAL WITH IT.

